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Planning & Heritage Statement

Full application for the erection of three detached dwellings at
The Monkhouse, Prince George Street, Cheadle,
For Mr. A. Chatterton

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Planning & Heritage Statement has been prepared to support an application for the erection of three detached dwellings on a parcel of land at The Monkhouse, Prince George Street, Cheadle.

1.2. Planning permission has previously been granted on the site for the erection of two detached dwellings to the rear of the site, and a terrace of four properties adjacent to the site frontage (LPA Reference: SMD/2011/0817). That planning permission has subsequently been implemented and thus remains extant.

1.3. The proposed development encompasses the erection of three detached dwellings, located towards the site frontage on the site of the originally approved terrace of four dwellings. Each dwelling will occupy a footprint of 69.3 square metres and stand to a maximum height of 6.2 metres, with internal accommodation comprising of an open plan kitchen and living room, two bedrooms and bathroom at ground floor, with a third bedroom and ensuite bathroom within the roof space.

1.4. The dwellings will be sited towards the site frontage, arranged in a linear pattern that reflects the plan form adopted by the extant terrace of properties. They will be set behind the existing stone wall that runs along the frontage of the site, and stand to a ridge height that reflects that of the adjacent terrace of dwellings.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1. The application site lies on northern side of Prince George Street, and comprises a parcel of land that forms part of the curtilage of a large detached dwelling known as The Monkhouse. The site is enclosed from Prince George Street by a high stone wall, with vehicular access available at its easternmost end. The site slopes upwards in a northerly direction towards The Monkhouse, which sits on the upper plateau to the north of the site and offers a commanding presence in views from the south.

2.2. The surrounding area is residential in character, and exhibits a wide variety of architectural styles, ages, and forms of development, including a mixture of detached and terraced properties, as well as two storey, one-and-a-half storey, and single storey dwellings. This is exemplified in the accompanying Character Plan which shows the characteristics of the immediate surrounding area. The site as a whole lies within the Cheadle Conservation Area and within the established built-up area of the town.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (March 2014) and the following policies are of relevance to the determination of this application.

3.2. Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Core Strategy (and, where relevant, with polices in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or

- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted

3.3. Policy SS2 of the Core Strategy states that provision will be made for 6000 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be completed in Staffordshire Moorlands (excluding the Peak District National Park) during the period 2006 to 2026. This will be phased at the average development rates to achieve the net additional dwelling completions set out below. Sufficient deliverable land will be identified to provide at least 5 years of development at all times.

3.4. Policy SS3 of the Core Strategy confirms that 22% of the total housing delivery within the District will be targeted on Cheadle.

3.5. Policy SS5c of the Core Strategy states the Council and its partners will seek to expand the role of Cheadle as a significant service centre and a market town. This will be achieved by (amongst others):

- increasing the range of available and affordable house types and higher market housing, especially for first time buyers and families;
- allocating a range of deliverable housing sites both within the urban area and, on land adjacent to the urban area. Sites within the urban area shall be in locations across the town which have good accessibility to services

and facilities with encouragement being given to previously developed (brownfield) sites. Sites on land adjacent to the urban area shall be in locations which relate well to the urban area, can be assimilated into the landscape, and would help secure infrastructure improvements for the benefit of that part of the town.

3.6. Policy H1 of the Core Strategy states that new housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in policy H2, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies in SS5 and SS6. All development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified local housing market needs and the strategy for the area having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision. The policy goes on to state that housing for special groups, particularly for older people, should meet a genuine and proven local need and demand and be of a scale and in a location which is appropriate to its needs. All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of existing occupiers.

3.7. Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst others):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance;
- protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping;
- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;

3.8. Policy DC2 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will safeguard and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, areas of historic landscape character and interests of acknowledged importance, including in particular scheduled ancient monuments, significant buildings (both statutory listed and on a local register), the settings of designated assets, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields and archaeological remains by:

1. Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the District's towns and villages and those interests of acknowledged importance.

2. Promoting development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of conservation area appraisals, design statements, archaeological assessments, characterisation studies and Masterplanning.

3. Preventing the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through appropriate reuse and sensitive development, including enabling development, unless their retention is not viable or there would be substantial planning benefits to outweigh the loss.

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and details policies in respect of safeguarding heritage assets, securing high quality design and boosting housing land supply. The content of the NPPF and the accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is discussed in more detail within the Statement of Case below.

Cheadle Conservation Area Appraisal

4.2. This document appraises the character of the Cheadle Conservation Area within which the application site is located. The content of the appraisal has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is discussed in more detail within the Statement of Case below.

5.0 PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of Development

5.1. The application site lies within the established built up area of Cheadle wherein a substantial proportion of new housing development is to be targeted over the plan period (policies SS2, SS3 and SS5c of the Core Strategy refer). The site furthermore benefits from an extant planning permission for the erection of four dwellings on this site, which forms part of a larger residential scheme approved under application SMD/2011/0817. The site furthermore occupies a sustainable location within easy walking and cycling distance of local services and facilities. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Impact on Heritage Assets

5.2. The application site lies within the Cheadle Conservation Area which is a heritage asset that can be afforded a relatively high level of significance. In developing this scheme consideration has been given to the Cheadle Conservation Area Appraisal which has evaluated the historic significance of

the area and identified features of townscape and landscape importance. It also identifies features within the Conservation Area which should be protected.

5.3. The application site lies on the north side of Prince George Street, and to the south of the area known as The Monkhouse, which is identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal as an area of particular interest, with dwellings mixed with small outbuildings and informally arranged gardens, set along a series of winding lanes. The Conservation Area Appraisal also identifies the view looking back towards The Monkhouse from the town centre as a key vista, noting that it provides a pleasant view of its varied roofscape (paragraph 2.28 refers).

5.4. The proposed dwellings are to be located towards the frontage of the application site, and set behind the existing stone frontage wall which is to be retained. The re-development of this part of the site will not have any appreciable impact on views from The Monkhouse, which is characterised by narrow lanes and dwellings set closely to it. The steep change in levels between The Monkhouse area, and the presence of existing boundary hedgerows, serves to preclude views of the application site from this direction.

5.5. In terms of the key vista identified looking north from the town centre back towards The Monkhouse, this is acknowledged to show a widely varying roofscape, derived from the mixture of building scales and styles within the locality. The accompanying Character Plan demonstrates that within the area surrounding the site there is mixture of two-storey, single storey and 1½ storey dwellings of varying ages and architectural styles. It is this variance in character that produces the varied roofscape which is identified as an important feature within the Conservation Area Appraisal.

5.6. The scale of the proposed dwellings and design of their roofs will contribute to the varied roofscape observable from the south, although it is contended that the majority of views of the site from the public car park to the south are obscured by intervening development, to the extent that only the upper storey of the dwelling known as The Monkhouse is observable from this vantage point (see accompanying photomontages).

5.7. In views from the nearby Morrison's car park there are more notable views of the site. The extant permission serves to screen the majority of the existing dwelling to the immediate north of the proposed dwellings (The Monkhouse). Views would only be available of the uppermost section of its front elevation, and its roof. By contrast, the proposed detached dwellings, which have lesser ridge heights and encompass space between their respective roofs, will serve to improve the visibility and prominence of The Monkhouse in such views (please see accompanying photomontage and proposed elevations). We see this as an enhancement to this important vista compared to the extant permission on the site.

5.8. The dwellings will be set behind the existing stone wall that forms the front boundary to the site, thereby preserving this important feature in views along Prince George Street. The dwellings will be constructed off the existing levels within the site, and achieve ridge heights that are commensurate with the height of the adjacent terrace to the west. By contrast the approved scheme would have seen the ridge line of the dwellings rise above the height of the adjacent terrace. The proposed development will therefore have a lesser overall impact on the area than the extant permission on the site.

5.9. The proposed development will also be of a form and design that it takes its cues from the contemporary dwellings permitted to the rear of this site, whilst also encompassing design features which are reflective of the character of the surrounding area, including Staffordshire blue tiled roofs, and a complimentary palette of materials. The south facing, gabled design of the proposed dwellings is furthermore reflective of the varied roofscape in the locality, with the surrounding area exhibiting a number of examples of this style of design, in particular those on the plots to the rear (yet to be completed) and the properties to the east.

5.10. Overall, we submit that the impact of this proposal on the significance of the Cheadle Conservation Area as a heritage asset would be 'less than substantial' and in such circumstances any harm arising has to be balanced against the benefits of the development. The benefits of the proposal are its contribution to housing land supply within the District, and its lesser impact on the character of the area and roofscape of the town compared to the extant scheme. The proposed development is accordingly considered to meet the requirements of policies DC1 and DC2 of the Core Strategy.

Layout & Access

5.11. The layout of the site has been derived having regard to the extant permission on the site, which encompasses two large detached dwellings to the north of the site (alongside the existing dwelling - The Monkhouse), with a linear pattern of dwellings provided across the site frontage, set behind the existing boundary wall.

5.12. The existing boundary wall is to be retained as per the previous permission, with access taken off Prince George Street at the eastern end of the site. Each dwelling will also benefit from an area of private amenity space to its front and rear in a manner which reflects the extant permission. Parking for the proposed dwellings and associated bin storage is to be provided to the east of the dwellings, again reflecting the layout previously approved by the Local Authority. The proposed layout is accordingly considered to meet the requirements of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Other Material Considerations

5.13. The proposed dwellings have been designed to reflect the growing need to accommodation that is suitable for occupancy by the elderly. Each dwelling encompasses the provision of two bedrooms and bathroom at ground floor

level, along with an open plan living and kitchen area. A further bedroom is proposed within the roof space.

5.14. One of the key challenges identified within the adopted Core Strategy is the need to provide opportunities for people to work beyond the traditional retirement age, meeting changing housing needs, and developing services which maintain people's social contact and independence and provide choice. Policy H1 of the Core Strategy duly seeks to provide appropriate housing for special groups to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population.

5.15. The Local Authority's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016 Update) confirms that the number of residents aged over 65 within the District is projected to rise by 39% between 2011 and 2030, with those in the over 75 category predicted to rise by 69%. The SHMA acknowledges that the projected increase in older people raises a number of severe housing, health and social care service implications which must be planned for accordingly. Housing implications include increased demand for both specialist accommodation for older people, and for services and home adaptations to enable older people to continue to live independently. The SHMA identifies that there will be a requirement for additional sheltered housing to meet this need, or potentially, greater provision of bungalows. The SHMA furthermore confirms that providing good quality alternative accommodation for the ageing population has the potential to incentivise elderly households to release equity and downsize, thereby freeing up accommodation for others on the housing ladder.

5.16. The conclusions of the SHMA reflect guidance set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph 021) which states that the need to provide housing for older people is critical given the projected increase in the number of households aged 65 and over accounts for over half of the new households.

5.17. The guidance states that:

> *"supporting independent living can help to reduce the costs to health and social services, and providing more options for older people to move could also free up houses that are under occupied"*

5.18. And that:

> *"Many older people may not want or need specialist accommodation or care and may wish to stay or move to general housing that is already suitable, such as bungalows, or homes which can be adapted to meet a change in their needs. Local authorities should therefore identify particular types of general housing as part of their assessment".*

5.19. The proposed development fulfils the identified need for specialist accommodation for the ageing population, encompassing as it does bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen and living accommodation that is all set over one

level, thereby enabling an occupier to avoid having to use the stairs should they so require. Consequently, the accommodation proposed will be attractive to people who wish to maintain their independence in old age. The scheme will also assist in reducing health care costs and help to free up houses that are under-occupied. The proposal therefore accords with the provisions of policy H1 of the Core Strategy in this regard. These are social and economic benefits which should be afforded significant weight in the determination of this application.

5.20. The Local Authority's chronic shortage of housing land also weighs heavily in favour of the proposed development. The NPPF requires that Local Authority's should maintain a five year deliverable supply of housing land at all times, and where they are unable to do so, the Council's policies for the delivery of housing should be considered out-of-date. In such circumstances, paragraph 14 of the NPPF confirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that permission should only be refused if any adverse impacts would arise to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development. The benefits of this proposal are numerous and include the social and economic benefits of delivering new housing that is suitable for occupancy by the elderly, and environmental benefits associated with the provision of new housing in a sustainable location. Such benefits lend significant weight in favour of the proposed development.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1. It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle owing to the location of the site within the built-up area of Cheadle, and the conformity of the proposal to the development strategy for the District. It is furthermore submitted that the proposed development would not give rise to significant harm to the character and appearance of the Cheadle Conservation Area, and that the design and layout of the proposal is in keeping with the varied characteristics of the locality. The proposed means of access and layout of the site is also appropriate, taking its cues from the extant permission on the site.

6.2. The proposed development is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policies SS2, SS3, SS5c, H1, DC1 and DC2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Authority is therefore requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development.